

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

FRIDAY, 16 AUGUST 1872

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 16 August, 1872.

Suspension of Standing Orders. — Territorial Annexation.
— Joint Library Committee. — Homestead Areas Bill. —
Loans Consolidation Bill.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved, without previous notice, and unopposed—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will enable the Council to pass Bills through all their various stages in one day.

He should not, he said, ask the House to pass more than one Bill, to-day, the Homestead Areas Bill, which it was desirable and necessary to pass before the resolutions for the resumption of lands from runs came on for consideration. If there were not many amendments made in committee, the third reading of the Bill was a merely formal matter. On Monday he should ask the House to pass through other Bills as necessity required.

Question put and passed.

TERRITORIAL ANNEXATION.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

1. That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the Islands lying within sixty miles of the coasts of the Colony of Queensland should be annexed to, and become part of, the said colony.

2. That an Address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to exercise the powers in that behalf conferred upon him by the Letters Patent, of date the 30th May, 1872, laid upon the table of this House, by command, on the 13th instant.

The reason for his asking the House to pass the resolutions, was, that there were several islands to the northward which were at more than three miles distance from the coast—the present territorial jurisdiction of Queensland—and cases of difficulty had arisen from the doubt as to whether they were under New South Wales or under this colony.

Question put and passed.

JOINT LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

Upon the Order of the Day being called, the consideration of the report of the Joint Library Committee,

The PRESIDENT moved that the Order be discharged. The Library Committee wished that provision should be made for the purchase of furniture, which was considered necessary for the library. He saw that a sum for that purpose was placed on the Supplementary Estimates; and, therefore, at this period of the session, he thought it was unnecessary to go further into the subject. He had intended to bring before the Council a resolution, in consequence of that report, which would have embraced more important matters; that was to say, it would have gone towards the general supply necessary for the requirements of the Parliament in the various departments. As the session was drawing so near the close, it would be hardly of advantage to do so now; and he should, therefore, defer taking further notice of the subject until another time.

Question put and passed.

HOMESTEAD AREAS BILL.

Upon the Order of the Day being read, The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved the House into Committee of the Whole for the consideration of this Bill.

Clause 6—

“Selections may comprise both agricultural and pastoral land but shall be made in one block and the total area shall not exceed six hundred and forty acres.”

The Hon. J. F. McDougall moved—

That the words “six hundred and forty” be struck out, with a view to the insertion of “three hundred and twenty.”

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he was in charge of the Bill, and he thought that it would not be well for him to allow such an amendment to pass without expressing his opinion upon it. He should, of course, divide the House if he was not aware, from what took place yesterday, that the amendment for limiting the area of homestead selections to 320 acres would be carried; and as that area was originally proposed by the Government in the Bill, he had less compunction in allowing the amendment to pass.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR regarded the amendment as a just one. He trusted that when the Bill went to the other House, it would be accepted; and that, although, as he was aware, there had been a fair fight for the increase of the area to 640 acres, yet that they had sufficient good sense and reason left to allow this amendment of the Council to pass.

Question put and amendment affirmed, and the clause as amended was passed.

Clause 11—Lands resumed from runs not open to selection until proclaimed.

The Hon. L. HOPE moved—

That clause 11, and all the following clauses to 15, inclusive, being the whole of the second part of the Bill, referring to "Lands resumed from runs," be expunged.

The House had nothing before them to shew any necessity for the proposed resumptions of the Government.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He had thought that the Honorable Captain Hope had meant to amend this part of the Bill in some way; but he had no idea until now that the honorable gentleman meant to expunge the resumption provisions altogether. The Bill would be perfectly useless, if the amendment was carried. Honorable gentlemen could, he believed, say nothing against the justice of certain lands being resumed; and there was no doubt that the resumption was necessary, in order that the public should have land to settle upon. The question was merely, as to what land should be resumed; and that could be decided when the resolutions came before the House. The effect of the amendment would be to shelve the Bill, as it would never be accepted in another place with the resumption clauses omitted. There was no use arguing the matter after the debate of yesterday, in which he had fully explained the necessity for the provision; and the division would shew whether the House would go with the honorable gentleman. Nearly all the land in East and West Moreton and Darling Downs, which was resumed from the runs after the passing of the Act of 1868, was already taken up; and it was taken up, in a great measure, by the pastoral lessees of the runs from which the land was resumed. The land was open to them, and he thought they had a perfect right to take it up. But, as sensible men, they must have known that the public would clamor for more land. More land was required, and the House had requested that Mr. Coxen, the Crown Lands Commissioner, should be heard at the bar to shew that it was required. That gentleman could explain better than he (the Postmaster-General) could, and he was now present. The House would certainly divide upon the question, and the honorable gentleman who had moved the amendment would be left almost alone.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE recalled the committee to the question before them. Clause 11, which was really the question, did not say that the lands should be resumed—it merely provided for something to be done after some future act.

The Hon. L. HOPE said he had moved the amendment with a view to shew that the House were proceeding without information that there was any desire for additional land.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR confessed that he was rather amused with the Postmaster-General. He had heard no clear and explicit statement from that honorable gentleman, shewing that the land was required, or as to

the why and the wherefore of the Bill. The thing was absurd. The Honorable Captain Hope would act wisely in not pressing the amendment; still, if he went to a division upon it, he (Mr. Taylor) should not see him stand alone, because the honorable gentleman was sound on the land question; and he felt it his duty to trust any man who was sound on that question—and he trusted Captain Hope far more than he trusted the explicit gentleman who represented the Government in the Council. If the resumption clauses were expunged, no doubt the Bill would be done away with. But there was no wish, on the part of honorable members, to do away with the Bill, provided that the Postmaster-General took amendments kindly and quietly. If he did not, on the third reading they would shew him what the common sense and the strength of the House was.

The Hon. L. HOPE: As it seemed to be the wish of the House that the amendment should be withdrawn, he asked leave to withdraw it.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The Hon. L. HOPE moved the following, to stand clause 13 of the Bill:—

"It shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to grant to the lessees by way of compensation for such lands as are now proposed to be resumed from their leases the right to pre-empt to the extent of one thousand two hundred and eighty acres on the areas included in such leases. Such pre-emptive selection not to include any portion of such proposed resumptions."

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he thought the amendment was almost as bad as that proposed in the first instance by the honorable gentleman; and it would certainly never pass. It required that, for the taking away of eight square miles of his run, the lessee should have the right to pre-empt two square miles, in addition to the right that was allowed to pre-empt for improvements under the ten years lease. He was quite satisfied that the House would not support such an amendment. There was no use saying much on the matter, and he hoped the House would divide as soon as they could.

The Hon. L. HOPE: Some honorable members might not be aware of the injury that would be done to most runs from which the contemplated resumptions would be made; because it was not the simple case of eight square miles, but it was the resumption of the very best land on the run, that was to be considered. It was, he admitted, somewhat confusing to put this before the House now, because the resolutions had not been submitted for consideration; but they were so mixed up with the Bill, that it was necessary to move in the matter now. The proposed resumptions would have the effect of destroying nine-tenths of the runs which would be treated as proposed under the resolutions. He hoped that before granting the resump-

tions in any way, the House would have further information and knowledge upon the matter.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE: It struck him that if the House accepted the amendment, the tenth section of the Land Act of 1868 must be repealed. That section authorised the resumption of blocks of not less than eight square miles; and the amendment would practically make the resumption less, six square miles.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: His understanding of the amendment was this: that as a compensation for the eight square miles resumed out of the ten years' lease, the honorable gentleman wished to have a pre-emptive right over the whole of the land held under lease.

The Hon. L. HOPE: Presuming, as he did, that the best land would be taken out of the run in the resumption of eight square miles, all the rest—the pre-emptive right would be exercised over the rest—would be second-class pastoral.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER: It struck him that the new clause had nothing to do with the Homestead Areas Bill. If the House went into the resolutions, to-morrow, there was plenty of time to discuss such an amendment. There was not the slightest reason for such a clause in the Bill.

The Hon. J. F. McDougall: The honorable gentleman who just sat down was entirely mistaken in the object of the Bill, which was, to deal with future resumptions—with the eight square miles which it was proposed to take out of the runs. This was the proper time to discuss the question. He should support the amendment, not because he cared one farthing himself for the matter—it would not affect him very much, and he did not care personally;—but because he wished to see the principle affirmed by the Council, that faith should be kept between landlord and tenant, or between the Crown and the pastoral lessee. He should be sorry to see it go forth publicly that faith had been broken, by the resumptions, without some compensation being given. He did not say that the amount named was the proper amount to be demanded; it was, he thought, small enough, seeing that it was not money compensation; it was not that the pastoral tenant was to receive 1,280 acres of land, but that he should have the right to pre-empt that amount and receive it, upon paying for it. The runs, as honorable gentlemen must be aware, would suffer great depreciation in value by the resumptions. Present arrangements would not be affected, but future arrangements would be; because capitalists would not invest in such property; they would say, there was no security—eight miles were resumed, and possibly, in a few years more, there would be a third resumption, and so on. He hoped the House would support the amendment. If the principle it

embodied was affirmed by the Council, there was very little doubt that it would be carried in the other Chamber.

The Hon. W. THORNTON said he differed entirely from his honorable friend, and he was firmly convinced that the amendment would not be carried in the other House. It affirmed a principle which would not meet with much favor there: it would allow the squatter to get possession of a third of the quantity of land that would be taken from him. He did not think that allowing the pastoral tenants of the Crown such a privilege was very much in favor with the people. No doubt, there was a very great demand for land; there was a scarcity of suitable land. All that was open to selection was of an inferior description. Owing to the pre-emptive right having been used, and to the quantity of land taken up by the squatters, the public was not allowed to have much of the land first resumed.

The PRESIDENT confessed that he was rather amused at the argument of his honorable friend who last addressed the House. Every man might purchase land but the squatter! who could make it useful; every man, but he who had redeemed it from its original uselessness in a state of nature and made it productive! The honorable gentleman thought that, to the people of this country, it would be distasteful that the oldest occupants of the land should acquire the fee simple! That was a doctrine new to him (the President), at any rate; and he hoped it would be distasteful to the House. He could not imagine such a feeling, unless that people who held no land were jealous of those who held land. Why sell the land, at all? If they did not want the land occupied, refuse to sell. Do not make the proceeds a portion of the revenue of the colony. He thought that the demand put forward on the part of the occupants of the land was a very fair one. If, for the benefit of the community at large, a certain portion was deprived of the benefits derived by it under a particular agreement, why not remunerate that portion? Why not give the pastoral tenants an equivalent in return for what was taken away from them? What was asked for would be a very poor return, he thought, in some instances. They had to pay for acquiring some secure tenure. He was not aware that any document purporting to give security of occupation would be of value in a few years. He was not at all sure that the fee-simple would be a better tenure in time to come than a lease was now, if the ideas which now obtained gained a little more ascendancy. No doubt, means would be found to overcome even the security of the fee-simple of land on which men thought they could rest. As it tended towards maintaining a principle in the rights of property, for which Parliament should have some feeling, he should support the amendment.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR said he had heard with surprise the remarks of the Collector of Customs. He was long of opinion that officers in the receipt of salaries from the State had no right in the House; and the remarks of the honorable gentleman perfectly convinced him that his opinion was correct. The Council dare not have an opinion, because it would not go down with the people outside, or with the other House! What had the Council to do with them? They must exercise their judgment and give their opinions independently. He never before heard such sentiments as those of the second paid officer of the Government in the House: that free men, who paid their way, who earned their living hard—not by receiving Government salaries, but by working with their heads and brains—should not exercise their thoughts and express their opinions as they thought fit! Oh! if things were coming to this, they were coming to a pretty pass, indeed. The amendment was a perfectly just and honest one, and it should be passed by the House. After having taken half the runs, the Government now came down to take five thousand acres more out of the leased halves; and what was the compensation asked for? That the lessees should have the right to purchase, out of the remaining portion, not out of the portion picked by the Crown—the eyes of the country—but out of the remainder of the run, after the proposed resumptions had been made, two square miles. They did not ask to have it as a gift, but to pay the highest price for it. It was asked for, so that they could consolidate a piece of the country for themselves, and have a block, for which they would pay the highest price. The House had been told that if the amendment was carried, it would be the means of throwing out the Bill. It might be so. And it might be that people outside were so prejudiced, or that the Capital was, that they, or it, did not look with favor upon the action of the House. Well, let the Council chance it; and let them shew that they had an independent opinion, and that they were not to be ruled by the people outside. He had no hesitation in saying that the Bill was never properly discussed in the other House. It was a Government measure, and the Government had not done as they ought to do. The compensation proposed was poor, indeed; a paltry right for which the squatters asked to pay their own money. The good spots had all been picked out of the runs by Mr. Coxen, who was an old hand in the field; and the resumption would be dire ruination for some persons out of whose runs the land would be taken. The House were told they could not make the amendment—that it would jeopardise the Bill. Well, then, if there was to be no compensation, let all the land be taken!

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said honorable gentlemen had a perfect right to decide as they thought proper; but as he did not agree with the proposer of the new clause, he

opposed it. The reason why he opposed it was, that it would bear unequally on different persons. Some squatters had very good land in their neighborhood, and they could take up a good block, without competition, which would be a very great boon. Others would be in a different position. Honorable members were very well aware that on Darling Downs, land was classed as second-class pastoral which was of very much higher intrinsic value than land in other places which was classed as agricultural. He denied that any injustice was done by the Government in bringing forward the Bill. The only injustice that could be done, would be in taking land where it was not required. There was no doubt that land was required in many places. It was quite competent for honorable gentlemen, when the resolutions were before the House, to say where land was required and where not. In many places 1,280 acres in one block would be perfectly useless, and persons would not take up bad land, and the clause would work very unfairly so far as such persons were concerned.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ said he always held to the principle, that when land was resumed from Crown tenants, compensation should be given. When the Postmaster-General was in the Government, he gave a different vote from that he gave when in opposition. In 1866, the honorable gentleman voted for compensation to be given to Crown tenants, when land was resumed from their runs.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The honorable gentleman was correct in saying that he (the Postmaster-General) voted that compensation should be given to the Crown tenants; and, in the Act of 1868, compensation was given to them for giving up half of their runs. If the Crown tenants had chosen, they could have obtained payment from the Government for their improvements upon their runs; but they took the option of selecting blocks, or, rather, of pre-empting certain blocks of land, in proportion to the value of their improvements, to the extent of 2,560 acres. When half of their runs was resumed, and when they exercised that pre-emption, and when they got the ten years leases of the other half of their runs, a condition was, that the Government should resume at any time, upon resolution of both Houses of Parliament, eight square miles from any run so leased. The compensation now proposed was in addition to what the pastoral tenants had received. They had made very little further improvements on their runs, or on the leased halves, since they had taken up their pre-emptive selections. In answer to the honorable Mr. Fitz, he said he had not changed his opinions as that honorable member had changed his.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: Not on this; on other questions.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: For himself, he was of the same opinion now as he was at the time referred to by the honorable gentleman.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE said he should vote for the amendment, for he really did not see what harm it could do to the operation of the Bill. If the land was sold, the country would have the benefit of the money. The chief objection of the Postmaster-General was, that the amendment would work unequally to those parties who would be affected by the resumptions—that they would not all derive advantage from the amendment. To a certain extent, the House must regret that they could not confer that amount of benefit which they might wish to do. Some unhappy individuals would be ruined entirely, not having the means of reinstating themselves in runs after their present holdings should have been taken away from them. It was not because the House could not benefit all, that they should not do what good they could effect.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL remarked that the Honorable Mr. Fitz did not seem to be aware that the rent was to be reduced when the lands were resumed from runs.

The Hon. L. HOPE: What guarantee had the pastoral tenants that the land would be assessed in the proper ratio? The runs would be reduced in value, by the resumption, fifty and seventy-five per cent.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: What would compensate a man if the only waterhole on his run was taken away by the Government? Would he be satisfied with the rent being reduced *pro rata*? The Postmaster-General knew perfectly well that if, as the maps shewed, the whole water frontage was to be taken away, it would be ruination to the tenant, and that no reduction of rent would compensate him. He was astonished to hear a practical man, who had been thirty-five years a squatter, talk in such a way. How a man's sentiments changed when he became a member of the Government, and a leader of the House! Mr. Murray-Prior outside the House was a different man from the Postmaster-General inside.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The honorable gentleman would soon be leaving the Council.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: Hear, hear.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: His voice would change then. No honorable member knew better what compensation was given for improvements than the Honorable Mr. Taylor.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR objected to the accusation. He was looking anxiously forward to be Postmaster-General, and he should make a jolly good one.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER: Question. He urged that the committee should go to a division, as the question had been sufficiently discussed.

Question put and affirmed.

Clause 14—Lessee entitled to value of improvements on resumed land if he does not exercise right of pre-emption.

The Hon. L. HOPE moved that the following, to stand as the first proviso of the clause, be added:—

Provided that the remaining portions of land held under lease for pastoral purposes after the resumption by the Crown in pursuance of this Act shall be re-assessed for rent and assessment.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he should oppose the amendment.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON said he thought the amendment would be a very fair one, but for the insertion in the Bill of the new clause just passed for giving the lessees compensation for the resumption of their runs. One or the other ought to be sufficient, and might be unobjectionable; but both were a little beyond what ought to be expected by the pastoral tenants.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ pointed out that perhaps the object in view was met by the tenth clause of the Act of 1868; but the Colonial Treasurer insisted upon the full rent being paid up on the 30th September, and he might not recognise the new clause any more than that the existing Act, as regarded the re-assessment and reduction of rent. There should be some fresh departmental arrangement.

The Hon. L. HOPE: What he wished from the House was a fair measure of justice, that, after the resumption, the remainder of a run should not be over-valued to the Crown tenant. There might be some difference of opinion as to carrying out the details.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR differed from the Honorable Captain Simpson that the amendment was a second compensation clause. In common fairness the Crown tenant should only pay what was right. He was not aware whether the amendment would be pressed to a division, and he was inclined to think that the Honorable Captain Hope should withdraw it; but if it went to a division he should vote for it.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: In the absence of the new clause, giving power to preempt 1,280 acres, the present proposal would be a fair one for re-adjustment, and he would not then call this a compensation clause. The resumption, as proposed, was in compliance with the Act of 1868, which provided specially for it. If the strict letter of the law was complied with, the case would be perfectly met, without such a clause as had been inserted.

The Hon. F. H. HART said he did not look upon the amendment as a compensation clause, but as an act of justice for land taken and land made valueless by the resumption.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: The effect of both provisions would be that the Bill would be thrown out, and not passed into law. And before a year was over, a very much more unpleasant measure for the holders of runs, would be introduced and passed eventually. That was his principal reason for suggesting that the amendment should not be passed at present; though he considered it in every

way preferable to the clause which had been carried.

The question was then put—That the words proposed to be added be so added—and affirmed, on a division, as follows:—

Contents, 8.	Not-Contents, 3.
Hon. J. F. McDougall	Hon. H. G. Simpson
" J. Taylor	" J. C. Heussler
" W. D. White	" T. L. Murray-Prior.
" J. A. Bell	
" F. H. Hart	
" W. Thornton	
" J. Gibbon	
" L. Hope.	

The other provisions were agreed to without amendment, and then the House resumed, and the Chairman reported the Bill with amendments. The report was adopted, and, in the course of the evening, the Bill was passed through all its remaining stages and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly.

LOANS CONSOLIDATION BILL.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of this Bill.

Question—That clause 6, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that clause 6 was the first that had created any discussion in the committee, and, on the motion of the Honorable Mr. Hart, the word "Parliament" had been substituted for "Government." The honorable gentleman desired that the price of the debentures should be fixed. If the clause remained as amended, it altered the whole Bill. In order to meet the honorable gentleman's wishes in that respect, an addendum had been prepared, which, if the honorable gentleman was willing to allow the clause to be restored to its original terms, would be introduced, to the following effect:—

"And that the price to be offered in such advertisement for the debentures of the two loans first named in the schedule shall not be more than pounds in excess of the price which may be therein fixed for the debentures to be issued under the authority of this Act and that the price to be offered for the debentures of the remaining loans enumerated in the schedule shall not be more than pounds in excess of the price in like manner fixed for the debentures to be issued as aforesaid." The blanks would be filled in, in another place.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ raised a question of order, that the Bill was a money Bill; and he urged that, in pursuance of the President's ruling, such an amendment as that of the Postmaster-General could not be made by the Council. The House must either reject or accept the Bill. He would put the question to the President.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: That would be the best way. He was not aware if the Council had the power to fix the price; but the Bill was not one for taxation.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He was not aware that he should have to ask the com-

mittee to make the amendment; but this was the proper time to bring it before honorable gentlemen. The sixth clause would have to be passed as amended; but he should recommit the Bill, as soon as the Chairman left the chair, for the purpose of making the amendment which he now only suggested for consideration. With regard to what had fallen from the Honorable Mr. Fitz, there could be no doubt whatever that, according to the practice of the House of Lords, the Upper House had the power to alter such Bills.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: The Council were told by the Constitution Act that they had not.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Yes. If a money Bill was altered in the House of Lords, it was tantamount to having the Bill read that day six months; because the Commons were so jealous of their privileges that they would not have any alteration made by the Lords in a money Bill. If the honorable member's contention was right, then it was incompetent for the Council to make even the amendment that had been made in the clause now before the committee. However, he could hardly agree with the honorable gentleman. He did not think it was at all the intention of the Honorable Mr. Hart to throw out the Bill; the honorable gentleman had expressed himself highly in favor of consolidation. It was due to the honorable gentleman, who had gone to some trouble in the matter, that this endeavor should be made to meet his views.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ moved—

That the Chairman leave the chair and report to the President that a question had been raised for his ruling—Whether the House has power to alter the Bill?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL quoted "May," in support of his view; and he referred the honorable gentleman to "Hansard's Debates" of the Imperial Parliament for 1867, p. 415.

The Hon. W. HOBBS observed that the Honorable Mr. Fitz had repeatedly introduced money Bills himself; and it was only the other day that he introduced one for the sale of colonial wine, which involved taxation.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: It was thrown out.

The Hon. W. HOBBS: The present Bill did not come within the category of those Bills which involved taxation.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER: It was a very great pity that privilege should be at stake for such a minor consideration.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: The Bill involved four and a-half millions of money. He insisted upon his point, that the committee had not the power to alter the Bill, which was a money Bill.

The Hon. W. HOBBS quoted "May," to shew that any charge upon the people by the Bill was involved incidentally only, and that there was nothing to interfere with the House, if they thought fit to amend the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule that we have the power.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ said he disagreed with the Chairman's ruling, and insisted upon his motion.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON pointed out that the Honorable Mr. Fitz had strenuously supported the only amendment that had been made in the Bill.

Eventually, the question—That the Chairman leave the chair—was put and negatived, upon a division:—Contents, 2; Not-Contents, 10.

The Hon. F. H. HART said the amendment suggested by the honorable the Postmaster-General met, to a very great extent, if not entirely, the objections to the Bill that he advanced, last night. In moving the amendment that had been made in the clause, he was not actuated by any desire to suppress or burke the Bill. He had consulted no one about it, and acted in concert with no honorable members, but on his own responsibility, solely and wholly. For the past two or three days he had been endeavoring to get information, and he was left in a state of great uncertainty as to the effect of the Bill. Tables had been laid before the House, but he was not prepared to verify them. They required a better arithmetician than he was to do that. He had voted for going into committee, for the sake of getting information; but the Bill was being carried through committee at such a pace, that he, as a new member and unused to the forms of the House, was aghast. However, he reflected that the Bill dealt with millions of money, and he would not be a party to what he could not quite understand and approve of. Hence his amendment. If the subject of the Bill was so important, Parliament, he thought, ought to take the responsibility of instructing the agent who was to be sent home. He did not say this, meaning in any way to reflect on the Government, nor did he mean to say that the Government would not use their best ability and judgment for effecting the operation proposed by the Bill. He thought that the Government had the interest of the country at heart, and that in dealing with the conversion and consolidation of the public debt they would be very careful. But something should be put into the Bill—not the actual figures—to guide the conduct of the agent. If, hereafter, the Act miscarried, the Parliament that passed it would alone be responsible. As to the responsibility of the Government, the present Ministry might be out of office; but there were sure to be some of the present members of the Assembly in Parliament, and they could be called to account for having allowed the measure to pass. When mercantile houses or financial firms sent an agent into a foreign country to do business, they usually gave him tables to regulate his transactions; and he did not see why the agent under the Bill should not be furnished with tables for dealing with the

debentures. With regard to the amendment of the Postmaster-General, he should like to see the blanks filled up by the Council; but he was unwilling at this late period of the session to raise the question of privilege with the other House. And he was the less inclined to press it, because there were members in the other House who would look after the figures to be filled in. The Bill would be a good one, if faithfully worked out in respect of the "rates and terms." He had not been aware that his action might cause the Bill to be lost; but he had conversations, since, with honorable members of the Assembly who had told him that the Bill had been rushed through that House almost in too great a hurry, and that they were rather ashamed of not having expressed their individual views upon it. There was no disapprobation of it; but the feeling was that they would like to have the Bill back again, and to have a sliding scale fixed. There was a hope that it would be fixed on a satisfactory footing. He was sorry that, yesterday, anything was said about the person to be sent home; it was said that the Colonial Treasurer was to go.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: The Government said so.

The Hon. F. H. HART: Well, he had read it somewhere, too. If the Honorable Mr. Bell was to go, he was as honest and straightforward a man, a man of strict integrity, as any in the colony; and no one would say a word against him. Whether Mr. Bell or anybody else went home, he must, before entering upon this scheme, associate himself, or bring himself into contact with the Crown Agents, or some well-known firm—Baring Brothers or Rothschilds—who were in the habit of dealing on the Stock Exchange, and he must get from them the best advice on the subject of his duties. And he must be in constant communication with the colony, whether the telegraph was established or not. If the telegraph was established, it would be a great advantage.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ said he was glad that the division had taken place, and that the Council had power to alter a money Bill. If a Loan Bill was not a money Bill, he did not know what was.

The Hon. L. HOPE: The Bill did not originate in the Council.

The Hon. W. HOBBS: It was a consolidation Bill, and referred to money already borrowed.

The clause was passed, as were also the remaining provisions of the Bill. The House then resumed, and the Chairman reported the Bill as amended.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was re-committed, for the further consideration of the sixth clause.

The Hon. F. H. HART was understood to say that the agent would be restricted to retiring debentures at a fixed rate. In regard to selling, he presumed that the agent had to buy 6 per cents. at 112, in which case he could

place the 4 per cents. at 90. If the sellers of the 6 per cents. would take the 4 per cents. at 90, the latter having forty years' currency, would leave the holders in the same position as regarded interest as if they kept the outstanding debentures. So long as the margin of 22 per cent. was observed, the colony could not lose.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER said if the Honorable Mr. Hart had not intended to impede the Bill, he should not have made his sliding scale or margin of 22 per cent. From the current rates of the colonial securities at home, he held that if the Bill was not to be thrown out, the margin must be made wider, for the holders of the 6 per cents. must have a fair equivalent for them.

The Hon. F. H. HART stated that he was not proposing to fill up the blanks in the amendment introduced by the Postmaster-General.

The word "Parliament" was struck out of the clause, and the word "Government" restored in its place; and the addition above notified was affirmed to stand part of the clause.

The Bill was again reported to the House with amendments.